

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 109471 TOSEC 040293
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 109471 TOSEC 040293

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM CAIRO DATED MAY 13, 1977 SENT
SECSTATE WASHINGTONDC INFO MOSCOW IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 8140

DEPT PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY FOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, UR, LY

SUBJECT: SOVIET "MEMORANDUM" ON LIBYA

REF: CAIRO 7800

1. DESPITE -- OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF -- GOE PUBLIC ASSERTION
THAT RECENT SOVIET "MEMORANDUM" CONTROVERSY HAS BEEN LAID
TO REST, PUZZLEMENT AND SPECULATION ABOUT IT CONTINUE
LOCALLY. THERE ARE CONFLICTING STORIES ABOUT WHAT
ACTUALLY HAPPENED AND WHY.

2. AT VISITING ROMANIAN PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION YESTERDAY
AFTERNOON, I HAD A CHANCE TO ASK SOVIET AMBASSADOR
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POLYAKOV ABOUT THE AHAM STORY (REFTEL). POLYAKOV
DENIES THAT HE WITHDREW, TORE OFF OR AGREED NOT TO GIVE
FAHMY ANY SOVIET MEMORANDUM. HE INSISTS THAT SOLE MESSAGE
WHICH HE CONVEYED ON APRIL 29 WAS SOVIET DESIRE HAVE BETTER
RELATIONS WITH GOE. HE CLAIMS AHAM STORY ENTIRELY
FABRICATED BY FAHMY AND COMMENTED RUEFULLY ON SADAT'S
MAY 1 PUBLIC ATTACK ON USSR AFTER FAHMY HAD EARLIER

INDICATED INCIDENT CLOSED. ASKED WHY SOVIET MEMORANDUM HAD INITIALLY BEEN GIVEN TO CERTAIN ARAB GOVTS, POLYAKOV SAID WITH STRAIGHT FACE THAT USSR DID SO BECAUSE OF ITS CONCERN FOR PEACE IN THE AREA. AN EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN CONFLICT COULD SPREAD AND WOULD IN ANY CASE BE AGAINST ARAB INTERESTS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED SOVIET ESTIMATE WAS THAT EGYPTIANS WOULD NOT ATTACK LIBYA, BUT INSISTED SOVIET MEMORANDUM WAS JUSTIFIED.

3. SEPARATELY, EAST GERMAN AND BULGARIAN AMBASSADORS TOLD ME THEY UNDERSTOOD POLYAKOV HAD DELIVERED SOVIET MEMORANDUM TO FAHMY AND ALSO CLAIMED AHRAM STORY A FABRICATION. ASKED WHY SOVIETS HAD SENT MEMORANDUM TO ARAB COUNTRIES, EAST GERMAN TOOK THE POSITION THAT USSR, AS A SUPER-POWER, MUST MAKE KNOWN ITS VIEWS ON AREA CONTROVERSIES WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO HOSTILITIES. IN SOME PLACES, SOVIET AMBASSADORS HAD GIVEN "MEMORANDUM" AND IN OTHERS THEY HAD SIMPLY MADE DEMARCHE ORALLY. BOTH EAST GERMAN AND BULGARIAN AMBASSADORS VIEWED AHRAM STORY AS FAHMY EFFORT TO SAVE FACE.

4. LATER IN THE EVENING I MET WITH FAHMY, WHO CHEERFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED BEING SOURCE OF AHRAM STORY AND INSISTED IT WAS FACTUALLY CORRECT. POLYAKOV HAD TRIED TO READ HIM MEMORANDUM BEFORE GIVING IT TO HIM. HE, FAHMY, HAD TOLD HIM TO STOP; GOE WOULD NOT HEAR ANY SUCH MESSAGE. SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAD THEREUPON TORN OFF OR SEPARATED OFFENDING SECTION OF HIS MESSAGE AND TAKEN IT BACK. WHEN I MENTIONED EASTERN BLOCK DIPLOMATS' COMMENTS ON CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS MATTER, FAHMY SAID HE WOULD SHOW ME THE SOVIET MEMORANDUM AND WHERE POLYAKOV HAD TORN IT OFF. SOLE DOCUMENT POLYAKOV HAD GIVEN HIM AND HE HAD ACCEPTED EXPRESSED SOVIETS DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS AND SPOKE OF SUCCESS FAHMY/GROMYKO MEETING IN SOFIA.

5. SEPARATELY, ONE OF FAHMY'S AIDES TOLD EMBOFF THAT FINAL ACT IN DEMARCHE DRAMA HAD BEEN AN ORAL PRESENTATION BY POLYAKOV TO FAHMY ASKING FOR BETTER RELATIONS. FAHMY'S AID CLAIMED THAT POLYAKOV NEITHER WITHDREW DEMARCHE NOR APOLOGIZED. BY MUTUAL CONSENT, HOWEVER, GOE CONSIDERS INCIDENT CLOSED--AT LEAST FOR NOW.
EILTS UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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